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MONTANA NEWS

SOCIAL AND REHABILITATION SERVICES

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In this issue, on page . . .

2	Youth Services Expanding
2	Letter from the Editor
3	Fagan is National Counselor of Year
4	Equipment for the Visually Impaired
6	Deaf Woman Wins McDonalds' Award
7	Handicapped People Speak Out
8	Governor Talks to Senior Citizens
10	Senior Citizen of the Year
11	Priorities for Seniors
12	Next Year's Conference on Aging
13	Help for Renal Disease
14	Program Integrity Bureau
14	Medicaid Study
15	MAR Awards
15	Veterans' Survivors' Benefits
16	Melby Named to Board of Directors
16	Disability Determinations

Services for Youth
Grow in Montana

There's an old saying that if you tell somebody something long enough he'll begin to believe it. Where juveniles are concerned, the Child and Youth Development Bureau of the Montana Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services wants to do everything it can to prevent youths from being labeled "delinquent" or "bad" and then acting accordingly.

Bea Lunda is the youth development worker in Shelby, and she reports that her services to help youth are being expanded in Northern Montana to increase alternatives to "delinquent" or "troublesome" behavior within Montana communities. Her expertise now is available to the 12th Judicial District and the Fort Belknap, Blackfeet and Rocky Boy Indian Reservations.

Lunda and the Child and Youth Development Bureau do not work directly with the young people. Rather, they work with communities' youth services systems to coordinate and assist all programs for adolescents within a community.

They believe that by working together, programs for youth can avoid duplication, attract more financial and volunteer support and thereby provide young people things they can enjoy doing and be proud of.

According to Lunda, the efforts of the Child and Youth Development Bureau are aimed at

STATE OF MONTANA



Thomas L. Judge..... Governor
Patrick E. Melby..... Acting Director

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increasing young people's opportunities for "rewarding roles that are accepted by the rest of the community" and that give all young people, not just those who've been in trouble, a chance to take part in activities that may give them a feeling of self-worth and self-esteem.

"Essentially," says Charles McCarthy, chief, Child and Youth Development Bureau, "Bea and other youth development workers throughout the state help local communities create and find funding for a wide variety of programs designed to help young people."

Among these programs are: alternative schools which operate in cooperation with local school systems; community recreation programs; short-term "attention homes" for young people who might otherwise be sent to jail; youth activity centers; summer camps; summer education; drug abuse seminars; youth employment programs; intensive counseling; assistance with health programs, and training for parents, teachers and the staffs and boards of directors of youth programs.

Because of budgetary restrictions and other priorities affecting the Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services, the SRS NEWS will cease publication after the next issue.

Although it seems that with every issue there has been a gigantic crisis of one sort or another which, on some occasions, has made us come close to climbing to the roof of the building and jumping off, we've managed to get through and, in fact, have had fun doing this publication.

The letters that many of you have written have made struggling through the crises worthwhile.

At this point, nothing will replace the SRS NEWS. However, we will keep our mailing list intact for the time being.

The Department of Social and Rehabilitation hopes that, through the SRS NEWS, you have become aware of human resources and services that have helped you become more self-sufficient and self-fulfilled.

Although this publication will cease to exist, the Department of SRS remains to serve you.

susan kirkpatrick, editor
debbie patzer, circulation clerk



Pat Fagan, rehabilitation counselor in Billings, receives the National Counselor of the Year Award from Bill Elkins, founder of the Elkins Awards.

Pat Fagan, Rehab Counselor, National Counselor of Year

He's First Montanan Ever to be Selected

"When you need him, Mr. Fagan is someone you can count on."

"He lifts up your spirits."

"He really understands your problems."

The Elkins Awards committee must have agreed that Pat Fagan, school rehabilitation counselor in Billings, is all his students say he is because he has been named National Counselor of the Year by the Elkins Institute, Inc. of the National Rehabilitation Counseling Association.

About 40,000 counselors passed through the Elkins Institute selection process which ultimately named Fagan the nation's top counselor.

Fagan, who is Montana's Counselor of the Year, this spring also was chosen regional counselor of the year to represent a ten-state area.

This fall he was presented the national trophy and a \$500 savings bond at the annual meeting of the National Rehabilitation Association in Hollywood, Florida.

Fagan, who is a school rehabilitation counselor for Billings School District #2 in conjunction with the Montana Department of Social and

Rehabilitation Services, was instrumental in developing a work-study program for Billings' physically and mentally handicapped special education students. This program became the model for other work-study setups throughout the state.

Under work-study programs, special education students work at part-time jobs while attending high school.

Fagan arranged and developed job training sites for his students who range from moderately to severely handicapped, according to Dan Geiger, supervisor of the SRS Billings district office.

According to Geiger, "By stimulating the community's interest and involvement, Fagan's cost per rehabilitation client continues to be the lowest in the state while his success is the highest."

According to the Elkins Institute, "The object (of the Elkins Awards) is to recognize devoted, professional rehabilitation counselors whose efforts far exceed required standard performance and whose accomplishments are recognized by their peer professionals, supervisors and community."



“This Is Your Calculator: You Goofed!”

Devices for Visually Impaired Make Daily Living Easier

This is your calculator speaking . . . Your checking account is overdrawn!”

Do you get the willies thinking of the day your calculator will speak to you?

Well, that day is here!

Designed especially for blind and visually handicapped people is a calculator that actually speaks out loud. You just press the buttons.

As the figures light up, as on a regular calculator, a loud, clear and precise voice says things like: “Four, oh, two, oh—plus five, six—equals four, oh, seven, six.”

Makes no difference what numbers you use or what kind of computation you wish to make, the uncanny little mechanical creature says out loud exactly what is going on. And, if you make a mistake, it lets you know that too.

This item is one of the pieces of demonstration equipment on hand at the Visual Services Division of the Montana Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services in Helena and at the division’s seven regional offices across the state.

Some of the equipment is elaborate and expensive. Some is very simple and can be purchased in any local hardware store.

“You, obviously, can’t show a blind person a picture in a catalog,” says Dick Field of Visual Services who is in charge of case service equipment. Thus the demonstration equipment.

Demonstrations may be arranged by groups who work with the visually impaired and blind or by visually handicapped individuals. The equipment also will be used for public

information and education displays and demonstrations.

A Braille wristwatch is another of the items in the inventory. The glass face flips up so the hands can be felt. Three raised dots mark the numeral twelve, two dots mark each of the quarters and single dots mark the rest of the numerals.

The blind person who reads the watch at seven o’clock on a Saturday morning and goes out to work on the garage he or she is building can drive the next door neighbor right up the wall with an audible level. This device buzzes like a seatbelt warning device until it’s placed on the EXACT level.

One piece of equipment which Visual Services does not have, but which is on the market, is a unit that will read aloud any printed page. And if, for instance, the listener doesn’t understand a particular word, the machine will go back and spell out the word that wasn’t clearly heard.

Visual Services does have a device known as Optacon which translates the written word into corresponding dots that the finger can feel. The reader lays the index finger across a little trough of vibrating rods, runs a minute television camera over whatever he or she wants to read, and the printed matter is translated into the appropriate letters which can be “read” by the finger.

Another reading aide magnifies printed material or drawings 42 times. The reader slips the material under a telescopic device which enlarges the material and displays it on a screen similar to a television screen. This equipment



Dick Field of the Visual Services Division demonstrates a device which can magnify printed material and drawings as much as 42 times.



Wristwatch with a pop-open cover and numerals marked by raised dots allows you to read the time with your fingers.

can show the material as black on white or reverse it to white on black because some visual problems register light better than dark.

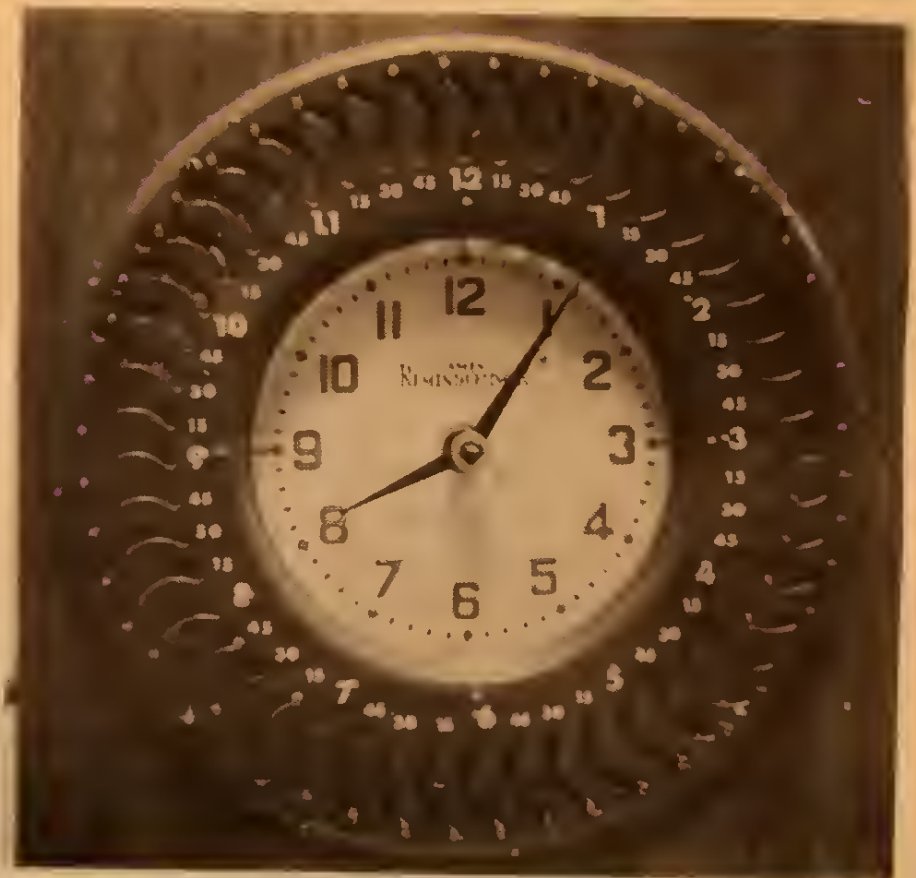
Writing devices for the visually handicapped include large-print typewriters, writing and signature guides and a tablet which looks like a child's magic slate but upon which the markings appear in raised dots.

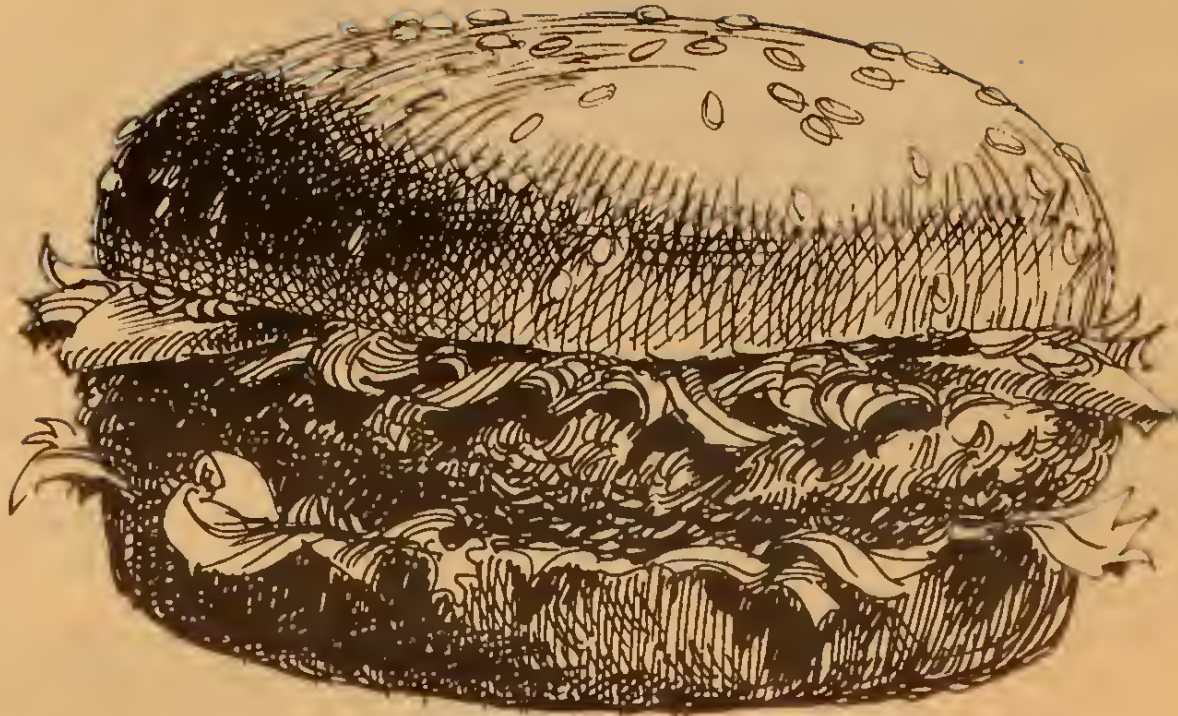
Some of the common tools and utensils that anyone might pick up in their hometown grocery or hardware store are a soldering gun with no flame which heats and cools almost instantly so that it can be positioned with the fingers, a heat diffuser for gas or electric ranges, a splatter guard to prevent cooking grease from splashing out of the pan and a small food grinder with enclosed blades.

Other items, designed especially for the visually impaired, include an audible compass, Braille timers and alarm clocks, a Braille circular slide rule and an electric fry pan with a Braille control.

For recreation there are Monopoly games in Braille with large lettering, cribbage boards with raised peg holes, checker boards with indented squares and round and square interlocking checkers, Brailled dominoes and Scrabble games in Braille with large print.

Catalogs of these and other items for the visually handicapped are available from the American Foundation for the Blind, and demonstration models are on hand at Visual Services district offices in Helena, Great Falls, Butte, Missoula, Billings, Miles City and Glasgow.





Lack of Hearing Doesn't Restrain Ramona Breshears

Crowperson of the Year At Billings McDonalds

"You deserve a break today—at McDonald's," jingles the familiar commercial. And when you go for a break in Billings, Ramona Breshears probably will be dressing up your all beef patty with special sauce, lettuce, cheese, pickles, onions and placing it on a sesame seed bun.

Ramona, who has been deaf since she was a baby, is "crew person" of the year at the Billings McDonalds. Orders of Big Macs, McFeats and McMuffins pose no problems whatsoever.

She spreads catsup, mustard, onions, pickles and special sauce with a flare worthy of a \$25 bond for her bun dressing skills.

In winning her \$100 cash bonus as crew person of the year, Ramona was chosen over 36 other contestants.

She told Christene Meyers, reporter for the Billings Gazette, that when she applied for the job at McDonalds, "They weren't sure I could do it. I knew I could, I wanted to work in the assembly line."

"Sure we had some apprehensions," said Milo Richards, McDonalds' ad and promotion

manager. "We weren't sure what kinds of complications would come with a non-hearing worker. But she has worked out so beautifully. She does an excellent job and the staff has a deep affection for her."

To help out, the staff have all learned a series of sign language codes from Ramona for ordering the McFeats, the McMuffins, the Big Macs and the Quarter Pounders.

Restaurant manager Jim Shilling learned sign language so he could communicate with his new worker.

"If the opportunity arises, we will hire more deaf people," Richards told the Gazette reporter.

Ramona was born with good hearing, but she became deaf after having German measles when she was about 17 months old.

"I can do many things," Ramona says. "I drive. I am raising four children. I have hobbies—softball and bowling. And I got a job. I did it on my own."

Ramona explained that her daughter, Roberta, had worked at McDonalds and Ramona decided she would like to do the same. A friend who can hear went with Ramona to petition for the job.

Ramona's husband, who is employed by Midland Packing Co., also is deaf. All four of their children can hear and all speak sign language.

"I have a message for deaf people," Ramona said to the Gazette reporter. "They must be persistent. They must not give up. They can lead normal lives."

And, as she spelled out the McDonalds' commercial—in short order—"They can have a sense of humor."

The Rehabilitative Services Division of the Montana Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services can help people with physical, and also mental, handicaps to become employed.

Montanans with Handicaps Speak Out on Special Needs

Handicapped Montanans will ask the 1977 Legislaure to pass a resolution requesting the state insurance commissioner to investigate and report on discriminatory insurance rates for the handicapped.

This is one of the dozens of issues affecting federal, state, local and private levels acted upon during Montana's White House Conference on the Handicapped held in Billings in November.

About 230 people took part in the conference and resolved to take action on the physcially and mentally handicapped's concerns on health, educational, social, economic and special matters.

Ideas for aiding the handicapped in living productive and fulfilling lives will be taken this spring to the White House Conference on the Handicapped in Washington, D.C. Delegates to the national meeting will be: professionals working with the handicapped—Jack Carver, associate director, Montana Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services, Helena; Virginia Sutich, rehabilitation teacher, SRS Visual Services, Great Falls; parents of the handicapped—Joey Lilleman, Great Falls, and Sam Stewart, Billings; handicapped individuals—Al Stiff, Bozeman; Gary Steuerwald, Missoula; Jeff Alacron, Forsyth, and Sandy Schneider, Miles City.

Alternates will be Tim Harris of the special education staff, Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, Helena; Ray Peck, educator, Havre; Elia Nickoloff, Billings; Patricia Southall, Whitehall; John Shea, Anaconda; R. B. Gould, Missoula; Sylvia Stevens, Missoula;

Naomi White Fox, Hardin; Elna Hammer, Billings, and Betty Van Tieghem, Great Falls.

Federal and state tax deductions deserve immediate action, participants in the conference decided. They proposed that handicapped persons be permitted income or property tax deductions or receive a tax credit for expenses related to their handicap. Such expenses might have to do with operation of a household or personal health and well-being or might be job related costs such as transportation, adaptive devices or other aides.

They also suggested that Internal Revenue Service, with the help of the handicapped, issue a brochure for the handicapped telling of deductions available to them.

Participants recommended fully funded and staffed enforcement agencies to assure laws and regulations are adhered to in such areas as employment, marriage, procreation and rearing of natural and adopted children, education, access to public buildings and means of transportation, and civil rights.

Special needs of minority handicapped, handicapped veterans and the aging handicapped were discussed.

Other suggestions included more research in all areas concerning handicapped people; low interest loans to remodel and construct homes and rental units for the handicapped; tax incentives for landlords to rent to the handicapped, and funding or tax incentives to invent and to improve recreational equipment for the handicapped.



Group discusses needs of handicapped during one of eight regional conferences held throughout the state.



Gov. Thomas Judge chats with people attending this year's Governor's Conference on Aging.

Montana's Senior Citizens Overcoming Handicap of Age Imposed on Them by Society

About 400 people listened to Gov. Thomas Judge during the Eighth Annual Governor's Conference on Aging this fall in Kalispell.

A complete Montana rostrum of speakers and workshop leaders highlighted the two-day meeting.

Gov. Judge spoke to the crowd of how older Montanans have "thrown off their passivity" to overcome "the roles our society has allocated them in what were called 'the declining years'".

He told how society, "by its frenetic worship

of things young and new," has made age a handicap.

"It's not like having your legs paralyzed as the result of an automobile accident," the Governor said. "But it IS a paralysis of a different sort. A paralysis of the mind, the body and, most devatatingly of all, the spirit, when, through its advertising, values and laws, our society teaches that aging is the most fearful part of life and that a person's worth diminishes as he or she grows older."

Judge praised older Montanans for counteracting society's impositions. "Older

Montanans have thrown off their passivity," he said. "And they have done so with a vengeance.

"You," the Governor told the crowd, "have become the single most energetic, committed and progressive social force in Montana today. You are concerned with the most important issues in our state. To your work you bring the greatest wealth of experience and knowledge which exists in this or any other society."

Statistically, the Governor reported that, "Contrary to general belief, only about five per cent of the state's senior population is residing in nursing or special care homes. The other 95 per cent, including those of you who live in retirement homes, is actively involved in the business of living—or at least has the potential to be.

"Over 100,000 strong," he continued, "senior citizens make up 14 per cent of the state's population. More than 30 per cent of the people 18 and older in the state are senior citizens. Statistics from three years ago showed retirement incomes the fourth largest economic group in the state, and about 85 per cent of you are registered voters.

"Your power and influence are increasingly felt at every level of society."

The Governor ran through some of the things the Montana Senior Citizens Association has accomplished on behalf of the state's older residents since its organization three years ago.

He mentioned the rally at the Capitol last year which brought about a reallocation of Title 20 monies, giving \$480,000 to senior citizens.

Because senior citizens made their needs known, the Governor pointed out, "This spring, under Title 20, we were able to allocate another \$300,000 to you for home chore services to enable more of you to remain in your own homes to continue contributing to our society with freedom, independence and dignity."

The Governor also mentioned the rally in Helena this spring of about 1,200 older Montanans from all across the state to protest



Gov. Thomas Judge addressing state's older citizens at the Governor's Conference on Aging.

proposed utility rate hikes. The effect of this rally on the case in question is yet to be felt.

"I am grateful," he continued, "for the prompt support given by the Montana Senior Citizens Association to the proposed property tax relief initiative that would provide \$115 a year in relief to the average Montana homeowner."

Architectural barriers in residential areas and public buildings are handicapping roadblocks for the aging, the Governor went on to say.

He reviewed some of the things the Montana Housing Division is doing to try to alleviate these problems. HUD involvement is one consideration, he said. HUD allows persons with low incomes to spend 25 per cent of their incomes for rent with HUD paying the rest.

The Housing Division also is studying practical and inadequate designs of houses and buildings used by older people and hopes to build a repository of information at MSU in Bozeman for architects and designers.

The Governor spoke of his long range budget and program planning effort to cut costs, evaluate programs already in operation and eliminate those programs whose usefulness has passed or whose benefits are not worth their costs.

Gov. Judge mentioned how much the use of the senior citizens hotline has helped to keep his administration informed of the issues concerning senior citizens and the unique problems facing them.

"The need for a Social Security hearings officer in Montana was made known through the hotline," said the Governor to his audience.

"Not long ago," he explained, "the federal government wanted to move this office to Denver. So the Montana Senior Citizens Association organized a petition drive to stop the move. I was among those who signed the petition. I am happy to tell you that I've been

assured the hearings officer will remain in Billings to provide speedy settlement of your Social Security problems."

The Governor mentioned Medicaid as another major concern of older citizens of Montana.

"Lately we've been hearing how Medicaid and Medicare have been ripping off older participants," he said. "I'm proud to say that Medicaid's record in Montana is a good one. In fact, Montana has been invited to have its Medicaid program studied and perhaps used as a model for other states because the Peer Systems Review Operations believes Montana Medicaid is exceptional."

This spring, Gov. Judge said, Medicaid announced it would remove its 30-day limit on hospitalization and its \$35 limit on prescription drugs.

As of July 1 of this year, he continued, a supplemental income program began providing a state-funded payment to persons receiving supplemental security income (SSI). This payment will enable about 325 persons—either living in nursing homes—or potential nursing home dwellers—to afford to live in a semi-independent setting where some, but not constant, care is provided.

"By keeping people out of nursing homes," said the Governor, "we can save the taxpayers as much as \$300 a month. And, most importantly, we can keep in Montana's mainstream citizens whose contributions of experience and energy are vital to our quality of life."

In conclusion, Gov. Judge told the audience, "Aging is natural. It should be a process we enjoy and learn from—not fear.

"You are pioneers in the national effort to live in accordance with, not in opposition to, the laws and fruits of nature. Your assertion today of your individual rights and dignities will change not only the condition of your lives but the condition of all human life for years to come."



Willard Thompson

Willard Thompson, Missoula, Is Senior Citizen of the Year

Willard Thompson of Missoula, acclaimed for his legendary sourdough pancakes, has been named Montana Senior Citizen of the Year.

"I don't know what we'd do without this guy," said one of his cohorts as the 85-year-old Thompson was presented the award during this fall's Eighth Annual Governor's Conference on Aging.

Thompson, a resident of Missoula since 1923, was the first chairman of the Missoula Council on Aging. He was instrumental in starting the Kathleen Walford Senior Citizen Center about five years ago. The center now has about 1,400 members, and one of its activities is running a rummage store.

Thompson drives the mini-bus which transports senior citizens to and from the center, doctors' appointments, shopping and other places.

Known for his reportedly scrumptious sourdoughs, Thompson whips up flapjacks for

six or seven pancake dinners the center serves each year.

His colleagues say he also plays a "mean accordian" for the center's dances. As a homesteader near Niarada in the early 1900's Thompson spent hours on the squeeze box. He used to ride 50 miles, he says, to play for dances. Five dollars cash would be his pay.

In the 1920's and 30's, Thompson was a Boy Scout leader. During World War II he and his scouts . . . hiked, to save gas, from Missoula . . . to Camp Paxson, their summer camp on Seeley Lake.

While his children were in school he was president of the Missoula Parent-Teacher Association.

"I like to fish and hunt," says Thompson. "Used to ski too, until I broke my skis."

Thompson says his main concerns now are "nutrition, transportation, housing and cheap drugs—all major problems for seniors."



Unidentified individuals sort through materials at Governor's Conference on Aging.



Marie Lawrence, referral technician in Kalispell, was entertainment chairman for the conference.

Doctors Say Five Priorities Exist for Seniors



Howard Ellsworth of Helena greets an acquaintance at the Conference on Aging.

The elderly need the means to support their self-image of their worth, their independence and the position they earned in society without feeling they have achieved only a place on the dole."

This is the first of five priority needs of our older citizens, two Montana doctors say.

Bryce G. Hughett, M.D., director of the South Central Montana Regional Mental Health Center in Billings, and Bertram B. Moss, M.D., gerontology consultant to the mental health center and medical director of St. John's Lutheran Home in Billings, presented a paper on these needs during the annual Governor's Conference on Aging this fall.

The fixed incomes of the elderly should be protected from inflation, according to the doctors, and they criticized "accumulated assets that are, in fact, prohibiting the elderly

from having any available funds. "Those," they say, "who have inherited unsalable or unredeemable property or other assets are land or stock poor—without cash-flow, ineligible for participation in public programs for the elderly, but, nevertheless, in effect, indigent."

The second priority need, they say, is maintenance of psychosocial status—"their dignity, freedom, equal rights and ability to make individual choices based on accessible options for their desired way of life."

Protection from criminals and from sado-masochistic abuse, according to the doctors, should also be included in psychosocial supports. They suggest extending the successes of the Child Abuse Program to geriatric abuse programs.

"We applaud," say Hughett and Moss, "all

(Continued on Page 12)

Doctors Say. . .

from page 11

that has been accomplished in recent years in an attempt to achieve equal rights for our elders . . . but we still avoid efforts to guarantee satisfaction of their sexual needs, their needs for an occasional drink, their needs to be outdoors—to commune with nature or to go where they please. Unbelievable as it seems, very few, if any, guarantees are provided elderly persons for them to be buried where and how they desire.”

The third priority need, according to the doctors, is high quality, accessible health services of all kinds which will not deplete the finances of the elderly.

The doctors stress that “we must be willing to provide for the elderly what they want and need and not just what we have available or think they need.”

Transportation is the fourth priority need, in the view of Doctors Hughett and Moss.

“About five per cent of the elderly are home-bound due to physical or mental incapacities,” they say. “Eighty per cent of those over 65 who are living in the community are mostly immobile because of inability to drive a car or find available and appropriate transportation.”

The fifth most important need, Hughett and Moss say, is for more professionals of all kinds to be educated, trained and available to meet the needs of the elderly.

“The frightening fact is,” they say, “that the elderly population is increasing much more rapidly than is the number of professionals being recruited to care for them.”

A revamp of the Social Security system is another striking need of the elderly. The doctors say, “The nation’s mammoth pension plan will pay out \$1.6 billion more in 1976 than it earned in 1975 and will spend \$4.3 billion more in 1976 than it earns that year. If no changes are made, the Social Security cash reserve will run out in five to eight years.”

Among the minority groups of elderly that are recognized as needing special attention are single women, Blacks and Indians, people in rural areas, alcoholics and deaf and blind people.

According to the doctors, “The highly individualized needs of the various minority groups of elderly, and particularly the rural elderly, have been lost sight of in the recent and abrupt shift in federal-state relationships from regional office to central office regulation and enforcement . . .

“A change is needed in national as well as state priorities to focus on the human needs of our old people.”

The complacency of society towards those who are growing old should be shaken by the latest Drug Abuse Warning Network (DAWN) report which says, according to Hughett and Moss, that the depression and suicide rate is at its peak between the ages of 55 and 65 and continues at a high rate among the elderly.

They say that “drug abuse” is not done just by

the young but that overdosed elderly are common emergency room patients. Hughett and Moss figure the most abused prescription drugs among the elderly are secobarbital/amobarital, seconal by itself, quaalude and nembutal.

They stress the importance of varied and beneficially proven programs to allow as many older people as possible to remain in their own homes. Among the current programs they mentioned are outreach services, mobile health centers, homemaker services, expanded home health care, day care centers, group living arrangements and subsidization of families to take care of their elderly.

The necessity for well-trained professionals and specialists to carry out research and to care for and treat the elderly is strongly emphasized by Hughett and Moss.

They advocate inter-agency exchanges of personnel and services, and they speak out against cost reimbursement in programs for the elderly.

“Profit is an ugly word,” they say, “if it is the prime consideration relating to human welfare or safety.”

They go on, “Long-term care facilities have learned that public welfare does not always pay for the minimum services demanded. If the state buys only the cheapest services at the lowest level of care, there will be no higher quality service. We know the state pays premium rates for elderly persons in hospitals and state mental hospitals who really belong in less expensive long-term care facilities.”

According to the doctors, “This is the propitious time for change . . . The challenge for the future of the state is to seek the means of providing high quality comprehensive social and health care to the elderly poor without compromising services to the non-poor, within the confines of available public funds.”

Aging Conference In Great Falls, September 1977

Co-Chairmen Are
Keil, St. Germain

Great Falls will be the site of the 1977 Governor’s Conference on Aging, announced John St. Germain, Area 3 chairman, during this fall’s Eighth Annual Governor’s Conference on Aging in Kalispell.

The conference will take place September 22 and 23 at the Heritage Inn.

St. Germain and Norma Keil of Conrad will be co-chairmen of next year’s conclave.

End-Stage Renal Disease Eased by SRS Services

For a little more than a year Montana has been providing life saving services and treatment for people having chronic end-stage renal disease who have exhausted every means they have of paying for care and treatment.

The Montana Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services administers this program designed for people who "fall between the cracks"—those who may be eligible for benefits such as Medicare, Medicaid, veterans' assistance, crippled children's services and private resources but who definitely are ineligible for vocational rehabilitation services to treat their kidney disease. All possible resources must have been expended before SRS is able to help.

Among the services that may be provided to those who qualify are medical care, hospitalization, hemodialysis, medical supplies, transportation, dialysis machinery, attendant training and attendant costs, adaptive equipment and transplantation.

A bill sponsored by Rep. Bob Palmer of Missoula and passed by the 1975 Legislature appropriated \$200,000 to run the program through June 30, 1977.

At the end of the fiscal year, June 30, 1976, the Chronic End State Renal Disease (CESRD) Program had provided services for 12 people. Eight applications were pending and five had been carried over into fiscal '77.

The costs from July 1, 1975 through June 30, 1976 were \$25,000, according to Art Hart, chief, SRS Rehabilitative Services. The average cost for each client was \$3,252 and included both vocational rehab and other clients. Vocational rehabilitation clients may be eligible for the CESRD program too.

According to Bob Donaldson, administrator, SRS Rehabilitative Services Division, experience with similar programs in Washington and Oregon indicates that the program will continue to expand with an average of ten people having chronic end stage renal disease qualifying for the program each year in Montana. Each year about a third of those would no longer need the program because of successful transplantation and, in some cases, death.

Donaldson says one objective of the program is to provide home dialysis treatment whenever possible for people with permanent kidney disease so they don't have the expense of hospital care and dialysis treatment for two days every week. Having a machine at home is much cheaper over the long run.

Most of Montana's large hospitals have dialysis machines, and home training is provided for Montanans at Sacred Heart Hospital in Spokane. Montanans who receive kidney transplants under the CESRD program are sent to the University of Seattle Medical Center.

Kidney disease, says Hart, seems to strike most often the very young and the old.

Accidents and urinary tract infections probably are the leading causes, he says and adds that untreated diabetes and cancer also can lead to permanent kidney failure.

Anyone having permanent kidney failure who thinks they may qualify for assistance should call the Rehabilitative Services Division, Montana Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services in Helena.

Aside from the kidney program, putting physically, mentally or emotionally handicapped persons back to work—or to work for the first time—is the ultimate goal of the Rehabilitative Services Division of the Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services.

A satisfying job that provides adequate earnings not only leads to fewer cases on the welfare rolls, but, more importantly, provides a person that essential feeling of self-worth.

Emphasis in the Rehabilitative Services Program is first on the severely disabled.

As described by federal law, vocational rehabilitative services are "any goods or services necessary to render a handicapped individual fit to engage in a gainful occupation." These include:

- evaluation of rehabilitation potential;
- counseling, guidance and referral;
- physical and mental restoration services;
- vocational and other training services;
- maintenance;
- transportation;
- services to members of a handicapped individual's family necessary for the adjustment and rehabilitation of the handicapped person;
- interpreter services for the deaf;
- reader services, rehabilitation teaching services and orientation-mobility services for the blind;
- telecommunications, sensory and other technological aids and devices;
- placement in suitable employment;
- post-employment services to assist handicapped individuals in maintaining suitable employment;
- occupational licenses, tools, initial equipment, stocks (including livestock) and supplies, and,
- other goods and services which can reasonably be expected to benefit a handicapped individual in terms of employability.

Eligibility for vocational rehabilitation is based on 1) the presence of a physical or mental disability which constitutes a substantial handicap to employment and 2) a reasonable expectation that vocational rehabilitation services may benefit the individual by increasing his or her chances for employment.

Program Integrity Bureau Improves SRS Services

Montana is consolidating its existing efforts to crack down on welfare fraud, administrative errors and collection of child support payments with the formation of a Program Integrity Bureau in the department of Social and Rehabilitation Services.

The Program Integrity Bureau merges personnel and programs already in operation within the SRS Economic Assistance Division to allow more efficient use of present staff and time, says, Jack Carlson, administrator, of Economic Assistance.

The bureau incorporates quality control programs for food stamps, aid to families with dependent children (AFDC) and medical assistance. It screens reports of fraud and unpaid child support and refers them to the Department of Revenue which, under law, is the investigative and prosecutorial agency for SRS.

"Our objective is to guarantee that recipients and providers of services receive what they are entitled to—that they do not receive more or less," according to SRS Director Patrick Melby.

Melby says SRS may ask the legislature to authorize an expansion of the Program Integrity Bureau to cover third party liability.

Judging by the effectiveness of other states' third party liability recovery programs, such an effort could more than pay for itself, according to Jeff Lyon, SRS management analyst. For every dollar invested, other states have been able to recover anywhere from \$3 to \$50.

Individual quality control projects have helped reduce the error rate in determining eligibility of AFDC recipients from 15 per cent a year ago to the current rate of 3.2 per cent.

The error rate for food stamp eligibility has been decreased from 22 per cent to 15 per

cent, and Carlson foresees a further decrease under the Program Integrity Bureau.

Within the past year the number of families on AFDC and the number of food stamp recipients have decreased, due in part to effective quality control, welfare officials say.

A pilot medical quality control project currently is operating within SRS and has completed its first sampling. The project has found that about eight cents of every dollar paid in Medicaid benefits are paid in error. Since this sample is the first, no figures exist at this time to make comparisons.

The usage and cost of the state's medical assistance program have increased over the past year. Medicaid officials say this is partly due to a screening program which detects and treats medical problems in children which might otherwise be ignored until they become serious and much more costly and also because of increased medical care costs throughout the nation.

With the consolidation of these programs into one bureau, Carlson explains that the same number of workers will be able to review all forms of assistance received by their clients rather than one reviewing food stamps, one reviewing medical assistance and one checking AFDC for the same client. Travel time for the SRS workers thus will be less, and the number of cases reviewed in depth will be able to be expanded without added expense.

In a continuing effort to alleviate unwitting and intentional fraud by recipients and errors by the administration, the Program Integrity Bureau will encourage more face to face visits between recipients and workers. It also plans more supervisory seminars and reviews to make certain workers understand policies and procedures and are carrying them out.

Study of Montana Medicaid To Determine Quality of Care

An evaluation of Montana's Professional Standards Review Organization (PSRO), the system designed to improve the quality of care given Medicaid patients, is being conducted as part of a national PSRO evaluation by the Rand Corporation of Santa Monica, CA, under contract with the US Department of Health, Education and Welfare.

PSRO's are groups of physicians who regularly study Medicaid usage in their state to determine if the care being provided by their peers is appropriate and adequate and if the charges are in line with the care being given.

The Montana Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services, which administers the Medicaid program, and the Dikewood

Corporation of Montana, which gathers and sorts information on utilization and dispersion of Medicaid services, have signed an agreement with Rand, a non-profit research organization, permitting the study to be made.

By its study, Rand expects to determine if Montana's Medicaid patients are getting high quality and appropriate medical care.

Concentration will be in three areas—care of out-patients in hospitals, clinics and doctors' offices; care of hospitalized persons, and care of persons in nursing homes. The study, which now is underway, will review computerized Medicaid information.

No completion date has been set.

Montana Association For Rehabilitation Gives Annual Awards



John Schatzlein

Dr. Arthur Westwell (top right), retired dentist and former superintendent of Boulder River School and Hospital, has received this year's Louis Allard Award, the highest honor bestowed by the Montana Association for Rehabilitation.

Westwell began his years of service to the handicapped in 1916 when he became an attendant for the mentally retarded. Now 86 years old, Westwell still is actively involved despite his retirement. Currently he is a



Dr. Arthur Westwell

member of the Board of Directors of Helena Rehabilitation Industries.

MAR Counselor of the Year is Jim Pedersen, SRS counselor for the deaf and hearing impaired in Great Falls.

Gail Neal, assistant director of the Billings Sheltered Workshop, has received this year's MAR President's Award for her work with the handicapped.

The Organizational Award was presented by MAR to the Montana Jaycees for their efforts to involve the handicapped in the community. Over the past three years, the Jaycees have raised more than \$45,000 for the Montana Special Olympics. They also have been educating their communities about the handicapped and have accepted mentally retarded as members of their organization.

Featured speaker for this year's MAR conference was John Schatzlein (pictured on the left). A member of the University of Minnesota's program on human sexuality, Schatzlein spoke on body image as it relates to the rehabilitation process. The conference was held this fall in Bozeman.

VA Benefits to Survivors Not Hinged on Military Death

Death need not be directly related to military service in order for a veteran's spouse or children to be eligible for benefits.

Almost a million widows and 797,000 children of veterans are receiving pensions from the Veterans Administration although the death of their spouse or parent was not directly service related.

Eligible for VA pensions based on need are widows, widowers and minor children of war veterans who died of non-service connected causes. No payments may be made to surviving spouses with children if the spouse's annual income exceeds \$4,500.

Children may still be eligible even though the surviving parent is not. Application may be made on their behalf to any VA office or to service officers of major veterans' organizations.

Possible eligibility of all survivors is reviewed by VA when notification of death is received, but sometimes circumstances surrounding the veteran's death do not allow information on all the survivors to be complete.

VA reminds veterans and their families that there are no income limits on eligibility for survivor benefits for spouses and children when a veteran's death is the result of military service.



NW Federation Names Melby To Its Board

Pat Melby, director of the Montana Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services, has been elected to a four-year term as a member of the Board of Directors of the Northwest Federation of Human Services.

His election, and that of Roger Trounday, director of the Nevada Department for Human Resources, to a two-year term, enlarged the Federation's board to six members. Other members are from Alaska, Idaho, Oregon and Washington.

The Northwest Federation is an

organization of area representatives of health and welfare agencies.

At a recent symposium in Boise, members agreed upon the need for more interstate cooperation including the possibility of joint projects with exchanges of staff and technical assistance, development and exchange of materials, joint meetings with federal officials and ad hoc task forces. Other possibilities include multi-state training efforts and a single insurance carrier for foster parents liability for the 13 states in the federation.

Disability Determinations Made Jointly

The decision on whether disabled people are eligible for social security disability benefits is a joint effort of the Social Security Administration and the Montana Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services.

To get benefits, a disabled worker must have worked long enough and recently enough in jobs covered by social security. The work record is checked by social security. Most workers need at least five years of covered work in the ten years before they became disabled, although for workers disabled before age 31, the requirement decreases with age to as little as one and a half years of work.

Under the law, payments can be made to disabled workers and their families if the worker is severely disabled and not expected to be able to do any substantial gainful work for a year or more.

Medically, that means a physical or mental impairment that is expected to last, or has lasted, for at least 12 months—or is expected to result in death.

The actual decision on whether a worker is disabled within the meaning of the social security law is made by the Disability Determination Bureau of the Montana Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services in Helena by two disability evaluation specialists, one of whom is a doctor.

In most cases they reach a decision based

on the medical reports from sources listed by the worker—the doctors, hospitals and other institutions that have treated the disability. The worker is responsible for charges, if there are any, for these reports.

Additional medical information, tests or examinations may be needed to make a decision. If so, the government pays for them.

Conditions ordinarily considered disabling under the social security law include severe heart disease, progressive cancer, a severe mental illness, permanent kidney failure and loss of major function of both arms or both legs.

People can be eligible for disability benefits under some other programs but still be ineligible under the social security program.

The worker is notified of SRS's social security disability decision in an explanatory letter. If benefits are to be paid, the letter tells how much a month they will be and when to expect the first check. If the worker is found ineligible, the letter explains why and tells how the decision can be appealed.

The Department of SRS also considers whether vocational rehabilitation services might help a disabled worker get back to work. The services include counseling, teaching of new skills, training in the use of prostheses and job placement. They may be offered to people not eligible for social security disability benefits as well as to people who are.

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